



# Grace Hill Church

*The Mission of Grace Hill Is to Gather People to the Table of Christ, Who Is the Bread of Life, to Be Transformed by His Grace, Renewed in His Truth, and Sent on His Mission.*

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:11-13

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ... <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ~John 15:1-2, 5-8

To this end [of saving faith], (1) our God and Mediator offers himself to us so that we may receive him (Isa. 55:1-2; John 7:37-39; Rev. 22:17), and that certainly by faith (John 1:12). (2) He acts as a suitor, standing at the door, knocking and speaking sweetly so that he may be received (Rev. 3:20; Song 5:2; Hos. 2:14). (3) He seeks spiritual matrimony (Hos. 2:19), surely so that he may be received by consent, which makes a marriage (Song 2:16). For this reason, (4) we do not become partakers of any of the gospel's benefits unless by faith we receive the covenant of grace and the conditions of the covenant, together with its Mediator (2 Cor. 1:20; Rev. 22:17). For this reason, (5) not receiving Christ, rejecting him, despising him, and not believing in him are synonyms in the gospel (John 1:11-12). ~Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, 2.9.

...and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. ~1 Cor. 15:2

...but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. <sup>14</sup> For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. ~Hebrews 3:6, 14

May 16, 2021

## Expressing Our Love and Praise: Worship in Song

### Declaring What We Believe: New City Catechism, Question #19

**Question:** Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor?

**Answer:** Yes, to satisfy his justice, God himself, out of mere mercy, reconciles us to himself and delivers us from sin and from the punishment for sin, by a Redeemer.

## Welcoming Each Other

### Giving Worship to God: Offering

#### Hearing God's Word: Scripture Reading *Luke 8:4-18*

And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, <sup>5</sup> "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. <sup>6</sup> And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. <sup>7</sup> And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. <sup>8</sup> And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

<sup>9</sup> And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, <sup>10</sup> he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'" <sup>11</sup> Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. <sup>12</sup> The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. <sup>13</sup> And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. <sup>14</sup> And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. <sup>15</sup> As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience [NASB: perseverance].

<sup>16</sup> "No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. <sup>17</sup> For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. <sup>18</sup> Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."

## Understanding God's Word and Our Lives

### Sermon: *Hearing and Living So We Might Bear Fruit*

#### Outline:

1. Moving Beyond Familiarity: Many Hear But Only One Soil Savors Christ
2. How Many Forces Are Arrayed Against Our Hearing and Bearing Fruit
3. The Importance of Cultivating Our Hearts
  - a. Taking Hold: Are You Holding the Word Fast So it Can't Be Stolen?
  - b. Endurance: Are You Working on Depth So Faith Won't Be Temporary?
  - c. As We Go: As You Live Life, What Threatens to Choke Your Fruitfulness?

## **Recognizing our Brokenness: Confession of Sin**

### **Public Prayer**

God, You are sowing Your word to us, but we are often not careful hearers. You desire Your word to have a bountiful effect, but our hearts are frequently hard, shallow, and enticed. We underestimate both the forces arrayed against Your word bearing fruit in our hearts, but also Your desire and capacity to renew the soil of our hearts. Forgive us.

Father, thank You that Jesus, Your True Word, came bringing Your word into our hearts. Our hearts can be unproductive soils, but You have the ability to make them attentive, rich environments for Your word to bear fruit. Oh, Lord that is what we long for—that You would bear good fruit in us! Spirit enable us to take hold of Your word with integrity and endurance, with love and purpose, with our eyes on Jesus.

### **Private Reflection**

#### **The Grace and Forgiveness of Christ**

Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth... ~Colossians 1:5-6

### **Responding to the Lord with Worship**

#### **Taking hold of the Good Word: Benediction (“the good word”)**

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb. 13:20–21)

---

Moreover, this reception of Christ consists in consent, namely when the will assents to Christ as he offers himself in the gospel, and does so by this law, that he be received as the one and only Mediator, in the way that a bride receives a bridegroom, that is, by assenting to him as he offers himself. For this reason, receiving, consenting, and desiring earnestly seem to be of equivalent force in the gospel (John 1:12; cf. Rev. 22:17; Matt. 23:37; 22:3). I say desiring earnestly, that is, (1) desiring absolutely, without any condition or restriction (Ps. 73:25–26; Matt. 19:16–17, 20–21); (2) desiring Christ himself, not only his benefits (John 1:12), just as God gives us first the Son, then those things that belong to the Son (Rom. 8:32); (3) desiring Christ entirely, not only as Priest or Redeemer, but also as King, as Lord, in the way he is given to us by God (1 Cor. 1:30). And (4) not only him entirely but also him exclusively (Ps. 73:25–26), that is, conjugally; (5) not only as a king but also as a servant—not only his glory but also his misery (Luke 9:23). Finally, (6) desiring him on those terms and conditions by which he offers himself, that is, under the condition of the denial of one’s very self, and so forth (Gal. 5:24; Luke 9:23).

~Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, 2.9.

### **Announcements:**

- **CORE Zoom Pin: 989209**
- **Renewed Covid Policy II. Starts 5/17/21. Goal: robust, Christ-centered, gathered worship**
  1. Based on new medical recommendations, for those who have received their final vaccine, and waited roughly two weeks for full efficacy, masks are not required for indoor attendance. For those who have not been fully vaccinated, masks are required indoor for their own safety.
  2. Our live stream will continue, so please make your personal decisions about attending. We understand that some families with children will prefer to continue with the live stream.
  3. We affirm personal decision to continue to wear masks. If you are sick, please recover at home. Let’s give thanks to God for continued progress against the pandemic and let’s be thoughtful and considerate of our body, since every member is essential!
- **Next Outdoor Communion:** Thursday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 7pm. RSVP to Kayli at [kayli@gracehillnc.org](mailto:kayli@gracehillnc.org).
- **Worship in Offering:** Three ways to worship the Lord with your tithes and offerings
  1. Use your bank’s BillPay system to give to Grace Hill
  2. Send a physical check
  3. Use our mobile giving option (either as a guest or by setting up an account):
    - <https://faithlife.com/grace-hill-church/give> or text the word “Give” to 919 296 1330.



Grace Hill seeks to live by and testify to the grace and truth of Jesus Christ (John 1.14–18). We are affiliated with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, a Presbyterian denomination with a rich history of living in Christ’s grace and truth. Our pastor is Ross Durham. He can be reached at [ross@gracehillnc.org](mailto:ross@gracehillnc.org) or by cell phone at 919.593.2169. Our Youth Director is Daniel Havener, [daniel@gracehillnc.org](mailto:daniel@gracehillnc.org). Our Worship Music Director is Kayli Havener, [kayli@gracehillnc.org](mailto:kayli@gracehillnc.org). Our Communications Coordinator is Kayli Havener, [kayli@gracehillnc.org](mailto:kayli@gracehillnc.org). Address: 515 Meadowlands Drive, Suite 500, Hillsborough, North Carolina 27278 [www.gracehillnc.org](http://www.gracehillnc.org); Facebook: Grace Hill Church; Twitter: @gracehillchurch; Instagram: gracehillnc